VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY, MARCH, 1999

SACWN
SACRAMENTO AREA CAREER WOMEN'S NETWORK INC.

BUILDING A BETTER SACWN

By now, SACWN members should be aware that a major reorganization is under way.

For the past several years, management duties have been delegated to a professional management firm. Now SACWN is returning to its original status as a volunteer-run organization.

As a beginning, we are looking at the immediate tasks necessary to keep SACWN functioning. But we are also in the process of evaluating the long-range hopes and goals of the membership as expressed in the responses to the survey SACWN conducted of the Sacramento lesbian community last summer.

We are utilizing the wealth of knowledge about our community that the survey results provided to determine the SACWN of the future. By far, the overwhelming idea expressed in the survey was the continuing desire for SACWN to survive.

Here is an update on events since the survey:
A strategic planning meeting was held on Sunday, October 18th. Twenty-two lesbians who had indicated by their survey response that they were interested in participating in such a meeting attended. The focus of this day-long meeting was:

* Review SACWN's history and present situation
* Use the survey to identify our community's needs
* Identify critical issues for SACWN's future
* Develop broad recommendations on how to proceed to address those critical issues
* Take a fresh look at the organization's mission and values
* Develop a vision for the future of lesbian networking in the greater Sacramento area

From this strategic planning meeting two committees, the Communications Committee and the "Reins" Committee, were formed to begin handling some of the vital tasks identified during the meeting.

The Communications Committee formed two sub-committees: the Telephone Committee and the Database Committee. The Telephone Committee began responding to the incoming phone calls and the Database Committee devoted many hours to overhauling our membership database. Information from survey responses was utilized in this process.

The second committee, known as the Reins Committee, was formed to answer key questions related to "what are the 'reins' and how do we pick them up?" Some of the organizational and administrative tasks identified were:

* Producing a newsletter
* Providing a means by which members could renew their membership
* Identifying on-going management tasks and establishing volunteer committees to handle those tasks
* Re-evaluating and updating SACWN's mission statement to keep it in tune with the expressed needs and desires of the community.

There is presently a core group of approximately 20 women who are devoting time and energy to rebuilding SACWN. If you would like to join us then, by all means, call SACWN at 451-8034. Leave your name and number and someone will get back to you.

We have much work ahead of us with weekly committee meetings and a retreat planned for February 5th-7th. Interested lesbians are invited to join us for our next strategic planning meeting March 13th from 10 to 2 at the Sizzler on Fulton Avenue. Please call SACWN for further info.

"The survey was mailed to 1,982 lesbians and 260 surveys were returned constituting a 13 percent return."

SURVEY OF SACRAMENTO AREA LESBIANS

This past summer and fall, as part of SACWN's strategic planning process, a survey was conducted of Sacramento area lesbians.

The purpose of the survey was to evaluate what current members want from SACWN, learn why many lesbians in the area have never been or are not currently members of SACWN, and determine what the interests are of non-members and current members.

The survey was mailed to 1,982 lesbians and 260 surveys were returned constituting a 13 percent return. This percentage is an extraordinary statistic, much higher than the average mail response return, and we want to thank all of you who took the time to complete the survey and return it.

Approximately 20 percent of the surveys were returned by the post office due to incorrect addresses. However, even this provided valuable information because, from it, we obtained changes of address which we were able to use to update the SACWN database.

The results of the survey offer valuable suggestions which can be used to develop a better SACWN. Accordingly, SACWN will gear its efforts toward meeting the needs of the women throughout the area.

In each of the next few newsletters, we will share portions of the survey results with you so that you can be informed as to the suggestions and comments that were made. Below is a summary of the demographic information elicited by the survey.

Age

The survey respondents were predominantly middle-aged or older. The greatest percentage of respondents, 38 percent, were between 46 and 55 years of age; with 36 to 45 years of age running a close second with 36

Continued on page 4.

A SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS

SACWN wants to thank the volunteers who gave input on the survey wording and content, labeled and stamped surveys for mailing, and helped process the responses.

Thank you to Jane, Jacquie, Betty, Rosemary, Renee, and Kelly. Special thanks go to two of these volunteers: Jacquie, who designed the spreadsheets used to capture the survey data, and assisted with the input of all the data and comments; and Jane who handled the hundreds of mailing list updates, changes and deletions. Both of these volunteers contributed many hours to this effort.

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The Open Book 498-1004
Armadillo Records (530) 758-8058
and BASS ticket outlets, 766-BASS
For more information call Lavender
Underground (916) 992-6843

Survey

Continued from Page 2

percent. One respondent was 25 or younger, and one was in the group 76-85. Eleven percent of the women responding indicated they were between 26 and 35; 12 percent were between 55 and 65; and two percent were between 66 and 75 years of age.

Education Level

Many respondents had attained a high level of education. Thirty-six percent reported having a bachelor's degree; 28 percent had a master's degree, and eight percent had doctorate degrees (including law).

Thirteen percent had two-year associate of arts degrees. Only eight percent reported their highest level of educational attainment was high school, and seven percent reported completing vocational/technical schools of some sort.

Annual Income

The income level of the respondents was correspondingly high. The largest group, 39 percent, reported annual incomes of $40,000 to $60,000. Twelve percent reported annual incomes between $60,000 and $80,000; six percent, $80,000 to $100,000; three percent between $100,000 and $120,000; and one percent reported incomes of over $120,000. Twenty-two percent reported incomes in the $25,000 to $40,000 age range. Only five percent reported incomes of less than $12,000; 12 percent, $12,000 to $25,000.

Employment Status

The majority of respondents, 59 percent, were employed full-time. An additional 17 percent were self-employed. Nine percent were employed part-time; an additional seven percent reported being retired. Four percent of respondents were full-time students; another two percent were part-time. Three people classified themselves as "homemaker," and five as "other." Only one respondent reported being unemployed.

Racial and Ethnic Heritage

The overwhelming majority of respondents, 89 percent, reported themselves as "European/White." Three percent reported as "Mixed." "Latina/Chicana/Hispanic," African/Black," and "Native American/Indian" each comprised two percent of the survey respondents. One percent reported as "Asian," and one person classified herself as "Other."

Stayed tuned for more survey data in the next newsletter!

"HOW THE SACWN SURVEY AND REORGANIZATION CAME TO BE"

By Rosemary Metrailer and Jane Irwin
SACWN's "Legal Guardians"

[Editor's Note: SACWN is currently organized as a for-profit corporation in California. This was done to protect the names of SACWN's members. Only Rosemary's and Jane's names are publicly accessible under this arrangement.]

As we reviewed bids and talked to candidates about taking over the administrative functions of SACWN, it quickly became apparent that the job had grown too large for the budget we'd come to rely on for so many years--we realized we couldn't do everything for the available dollars.

It also had for some time become increasingly apparent that SACWN needed to reassess what the community wanted from it, and to reformulate how it could deliver the products and activities desired. So, we decided to start from scratch.

Continued on page 5.

Survey & Reorganization
Continued from Page 4

We liked Barbara Webster's ideas and energy in the interview process and her extensive experience with nonprofit organizations. We liked her approach and thought process about the importance of operating organizations like SACWN as much as possible with volunteers, not paid staff, since small organizations just can't afford paid staff.

So we hired Barbara as a consultant and facilitator, rather than as an administrator, to assist us in designing and conducting the survey of community wants and needs, analyzing the results, organizing and conducting the follow-up meetings with volunteers who came forward to help with the reorganization/redesign, and helping us to re-formulate how SACWN will run in the months and years to come.

Now, we've moved past the consultant stage and we're in the process of putting all the ideas into practice; taking the first "baby" organizational steps to define what needs to be done and who will do it, and getting the job done.

VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES FORMING

In connection with SACWN's return to a volunteer-run organization, committees have been formed to handle various aspects of the work of the organization.

"Unlike the special interest groups, these committees are specifically related to the operations of SACWN," said Joy Fisher, a member of the SACWN "reins" committee, the organization's steering committee. "However, that doesn't mean that they aren't fun and rewarding," she added.

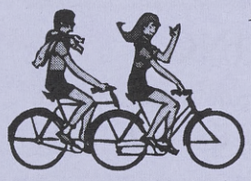
As a result of feedback from the survey sent out by SACWN to members of the lesbian community in Sacramento, special emphasis is being placed on making SACWN a welcoming place for women. One of the new committees, in fact, is being called the "Welcoming Committee," and is currently meeting to brainstorm ideas about how to make women feel comfortable and less alone when they attend SACWN events.

New to SACWN is a committee with the intent to help lesbians in the community who contact SACWN for assistance. A surprisingly large number of women responding to the questionnaire expressed interest in working on such a committee.

Committees and their contact persons are:

Welcoming Committee--Joyce (451-3018)
Events Committee--Kelly (992-6843)
Activities Committee--Anna (344-0386)
"Helping Lesbians" Committee--Phoenix (372-6051)
Newsletter Committee--Sandy (772-8630)
Mailings Committee--Joy (452-5513)
Phone Committee--Gretchen (922-6287)
Data Entry Committee--Nancy (452-6007)
Website Committee--Michele (683-1365)
Special Interest Groups ("SIGs")--Sue (944-7055) or Dee (443-2377)

Women interested in participating in any of these committees are encouraged to contact the coordinators. SACWN wants you!



ARE YOU SOMEONE WHO:

....enjoys getting together with other women to share activities?
....is looking for opportunities to have fun and meet new people?
....is more comfortable in small, friendly groups?
THEN SACWN SIGs ARE FOR YOU!!!

HAPPY CAMPERS

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

SACWN's Special Interest Groups (affectionately known as SIGs) are small, friendly groups of women who get together monthly (if not more often) to share activities of mutual interest. Below are listed some of the SIGs which are currently active. New members are always warmly welcomed, so we encourage you to call the contact people listed to find out what activities are being planned.

Have an interest but don't see such a group listed below? No problem. Just call Dee (443-2377) or Sue (944-7055) and we'll help you get your very own new group advertised in the next newsletter.

Half Fast Hiking Group

This is a well organized, friendly group of serious hikers who know how to have fun. We are entering our third successful year of day-hiking with hikes scheduled once a month all year long. We walk at a comfortable pace and usually average about five miles round trip on hikes that are rated "easy" to "moderate". Call for a calendar of events and an information sheet. All newcomers receive a warm welcome. Please join us for the time of your life!
Ann 443-3638

Top 10

Top 10 is a group of women over 50 and women who love women over 50. We get together once a month for dinner at local restaurants. We also enjoy gathering for special at-home potlucks. Our next potluck will be Sunday, March 14th to celebrate St. Pat's Day. Hosting will be Paula and Sharon. For more information, please call them at 967-0560 by March 13th

Newcomers

New to the community? New to SACWN? Let's get together and talk. Call Diana at 487-3124 for information about upcoming meeting.

Rainbow Campers

Commemorating the memory of Jayne Rountree, Founder, the Rainbow Campers met and planned the campouts for 1999 listed below. Call the Wagon Master indicated for each trip and they will provide you with necessary details. Since reservations are required, the earlier you call, the better.

April 16-18	Coloma, On the American River; Mary 723-5269
May 28-31	Edgewater Resort, Soda Lake, Clearlake; Denice & Linda 641-8565
June 18-20	Casini Ranch, Duncan Mills; Joyce 929-3074
July 16-18	Bear River Lake, Route 88 past Jackson; Kathleen 684-3741
August 20-22	Wright's Beach, On the Coast; Carolyn & Nancy 961-4722
September 24-26	Coloma, On the American River; Mary 723-5269

SACWN: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

During the reorganization of SACWN there has been discussion of who we are and what we should call ourselves.

SACWN stands for "Sacramento Area Career Women's Network." The name is similar to other organizations of the same type, i.e., BACWN in the Bay area, and others with whom we have shared newsletters in the past.

In the 1980s, when BACWN and the other career women's networks came into being, there was great excitement about the progress women were beginning to make in various fields of employment, and lesbians, who knew they would have to rely on themselves for financial independence, were especially eager to network with other lesbians in their communities.

But is this who we really are now? Do we want to be an organization exclusively for career women? And how do we define "career women?" Shouldn't women who are retired still be welcome? What about women who work in the trades? Do we really mean all women, or is our appeal to only the ten percent of the female population who are lesbian?

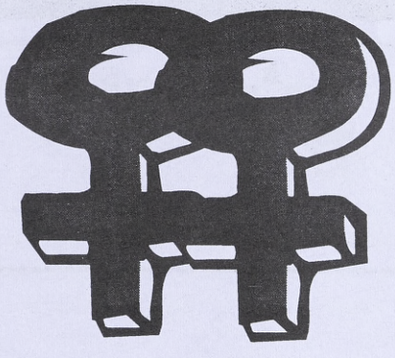
SACWN is, and has always been, a lesbian organization. However, we have always had members who do not want to be identified openly as lesbians due to personal and/or professional reasons, and we still do.

Although results of SACWN's survey of the lesbian community last summer indicated a majority of those surveyed (54 percent) feel it is not important that their involvement with a lesbian organization be kept strictly confidential, 30 percent still indicated that confidentiality was important to them.

If we change our name to something more easily identified as a lesbian organization, will we lose the support of the more private members? If we do not identify as a lesbian organization, will we be able to attract those members of our community who see themselves as "out and proud?"

What we call ourselves will affect who we are. Women will make decisions about joining or not joining the organization based in part on our name. If we had a name with the word lesbian in it would you want to be a member? If we leave our name as SACWN would you want to be a member? This is your organization. Your input on this issue is important to our future development.

Call the SACWN message line, (916) 451-8034, and let us know how you feel about our name and the inclusion of the word lesbian, or write your view in the comments section of page 11 and return it with your membership application.



WANTED: PEOPLE WITH COURAGE

Rainbow Bridge is a new non-profit coalition of gay, lesbian and straight people interested in reducing homophobia by community outreach and public speaking. We need speakers, fundraisers, telephone workers and clerical support staff. If interested, contact Paula at 967-0560 or Joy at 452-5513. Speaker training available.

Out for Laughs

The Central Valley Chapter of SACWN is sponsoring a comedy show fund raiser on Saturday, March 6th, 8:00 p.m. at the State Theater, 1307 J Street, Modesto.

Headliners are Vicki Shaw and Roxanne Ward, both of whom will be familiar to Olivia Cruise passengers.

Tickets are $16.00 if purchased in advance or $20.00 at the door. Tickets may be purchased or additional information obtained by contacting Faye at (209)529-1434 or by calling the State Theater at (209)52SHOWS.

The event will raise funds for the Chapter's philanthropic activities. These activities include a grant for Women's Haven, the Central Valley's battered women's shelter, academic scholarships for women at two local colleges, and financial assistance for families of women with AIDS.

SACWN ADVERTISING RATES

Type			Member	Non-Mem
Business Card - 3 1/4 by 1 3/4			$25	$37
Two column ad - 4 1/2 x 2 3/4			$40	$60
Quarter page - 3 1/2 x 4 1/2			$50	$75
Half page - 7 1/8 x 4 1/2 or 3 1/2 x 9 1/2			$90	$135
Full page - 7 1/2 x 9 1/2			$160	$240
Classified ads (per word)		$ .40		$ .60
Discounts (prepaid)	1 year	20%		
	1/2 year	10%		

Advertisers are not necesarily lesbians. We do not warrant the services or products of advertisers.

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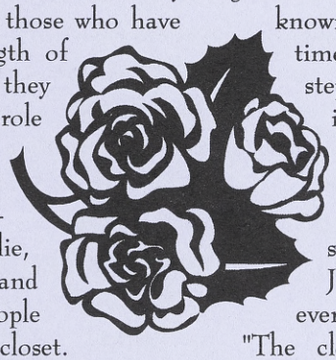
"THIS SPACE RESERVED FOR YOUR AD"

Jeanne & Ellie Proclaim their Love to the World

Two long-time SACWN members who see themselves as quiet advocates for change publicly proclaimed their love for one another in emotion-ladened voices before 1,000 friends, family and supporters in Sacramento recently.

Jeanne Barnett and Ellie Charlton, partners for 15 years, received the blessings of 95 ministers from United Methodist Church congregations in a holy union ceremony held in the Sacramento Community Theater on January 16, 1999. The ceremony, which some activists referred to as the Christopher Street of the Methodist Church, challenged a recent doctrinal decision forbidding ministers from blessing the relationships of same-sex couples.

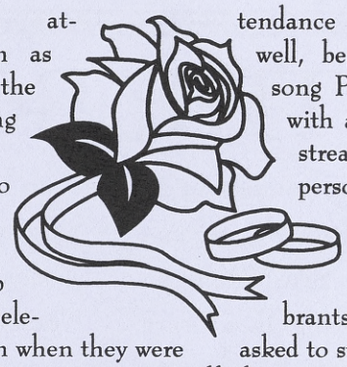
Randy Miller, a gay African-American who felt discouraged in ministry by the church and yearned for a revolution, recalled an early impression of Barnett and Charlton that led him to conclude that he could not see anything radical coming out of that combo. But those who have known Jeanne and Ellie for any length of time were not surprised that they stepped forward to play the central role in this act of defiance and courage.



In remarks addressed to the witnesses, Ellie, speaking on behalf of herself and Jeanne, appealed to gay people everywhere to come out of the closet. "The closet is dark and damp and it is unhealthy. I hope those of you who are in the closet will have the courage to come out. The sun shines out here and there is more love than you ever knew."

Some of this love was demonstrated by the Ballad of Ellie and Jeanne composed especially for the occasion. Lyrics poked gentle, loving fun at the perils of coming out at 50. "How hard can it be to seek a partner at fifty? How do I find her, or will we just miss? How do we date and who pays for dinner? Who opens the door and when do we kiss?" Both Jeanne's and Ellie's families lent their support, with Jeanne's side singing a duet from Phantom of the Opera, and Ellie's reading from The Prophet, as well as a poem written for the occasion.

The ceremony culminated with a laying on of the hands by the minister co-officiants. At the request of Ellie and Jeanne, the ministers closest to them were those who had surrendered their orders due to their own sexual orientation. The blessing bestowed upon the couple proclaimed, in part: [w]e recognize in this service the place of family, friends and church and the entire human family we gladly proclaim to the world that Jeanne and Ellie are loving partners together for life.

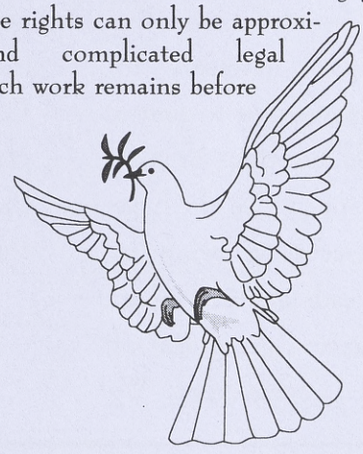


Those in attendance received affirmation as well, beginning with the lyrics to the song Part of the Family and ending with a web of rainbow-colored streamers flung from person to person in the auditorium. Lesbian and gay attendees, who made up about a third of the celebrants, received special recognition when they were asked to stand and proclaim their existence. Gay andlesbian couples also received recognition when they were asked to stand.

Some 500 supporters, who formed a Circle of Love outside, completely encircling the building, replicated the affirmation experienced by those inside the auditorium. One SACWN member who participated in the circle said it reminded her of the old days of civil rights demonstrations. Their efforts were rewarded when Jeanne and Ellie came outside to thank them for being there.

Supporters, both inside and outside the building, far outnumbered the few anti-gay protesters who were kept at a distance by mounted police.

In a press conference after the ceremony, Ellie rebuked a reporter who referred to the service as a wedding. She reminded the press that, if it had been a wedding, many legal rights would have been attached. For gay and lesbian couples, these rights can only be approximated by expensive and complicated legal arrangements. Much work remains before we achieve equality!



THE BOTTOM LINE

In order for any organization to survive, it must have the income to keep it viable. SACWN is no different. Following is a "bare bones" budget for fiscal year 1999.

The budget is based on mailing out a membership and update newsletter to our entire mailing list of 2,325, and mailing out a total of five additional newsletters this year to 450 members, potential members, and interested organizations.

This budget does not include any money to pay for administrative help. Nor does it include the "upfront" money necessary to bring in entertainers or to rent a facility to hold meetings or networking activities. We do have money in reserve to bring in Suzanne Westenhoefer in March, and already have a great deal of money invested in this event. We are hoping we will make enough profit on it to keep SACWN operating while we are rebuilding our membership.

Because of the transition in administration, SACWN has not collected dues for more than eight months now. Our survey showed that there is a great need and desire for a lesbian organization like SACWN in the Sacramento area. Joining and paying your dues will help insure that we have such an organization in this community.

We have decided to have only one membership drive each year, and that all memberships will be from February to January of each year. New members who join during the intervening months will have their dues prorated.

1999 Fiscal Year "Bare Bones" Budget

Telephone/ Answering Service		$700
Mailbox		$300
Administrative (postage, etc.)		$400
Corporate taxes		$800
Miscellaneous (fees, licenses, etc.)		$300
Special Interest Group (SIG) expenses		$300
Membership Newsletter (2,100 copies)		
Printing	$600	
Postage	$700	
		$1,300
Newsletters for 1999 (6 total)		
Printing	$2,600	
Postage	$1,200	
		$3,800

TOTAL EXPENSES

$7,900

SUBSCRIPTION APPLICATION

Name(s): _____

_____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

☐ New ☐ Renewing

Categories	**Rates**
Regular	$36.00
Sustaining	$48.00
Limited Income	$24.00

SUSTAINING - Contributing a little extra to help supplement others.

LIMITED INCOME - We consider a person living on a limited income to be anyone who is having a difficult time paying for basic necessities - food, utilities and rent - and who rarely considers entertainment as part of her budget.

Make checks payable to SACWN

Mail to: SACWN at
7485 Rush River Drive, #710-300
Sacramento, CA 95831-5260

Waiver - I am aware that certain risks or injuries could occur arising from my participation in SACWN, Inc. events and/or special interest groups. In consideration of the right to participate in such events, some of which may involve strenuous activity (i.e. hiking, golfing, skiing, cycling, etc.), I hereby assume all risks and will hold SACWN, Inc. and its members harmless from all liability which may arise in connection with these activities.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Can you volunteer?

We need help in the following areas:

Newsletter

☐ Writers ☐ Editors

☐ Proofreaders

☐ Layout & Graphics

Membership Communications

☐ Telephone ☐ Database

COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, VIEWPOINT

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1

SUBSCRIPTION ISSUE

SACWN
SACRAMENTO AREA CAREER WOMEN'S NETWORK

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED